

The Nation

Reviews.

COLOR AND LINE.

- "The Book of Job." With an Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON. Illustrated in Color by C. MARY TONGUE. (Palmer & Hayward. 10s. 6d. net.)
- "The Arabian Nights." Illustrated in Color and Line by RENÉ BULL. (Constable. 6s. net.)
- "Carmen." By PROSPER MÉRIMÉE. Illustrated by RENÉ BULL. (Hutchinson. 21s. net.)
- "Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen." Illustrated by HARRY CLARKE. (Harrap. 20s. net.)
- "Rip Van Winkle." By WASHINGTON IRVING. Illustrated by ARTHUR RACKHAM. (Heinemann. 6s. net.)
- "The Bible Story." By W. CANTON. With Illustrations in Color and Map. (Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d. net.)
- "Pictures of the Wonder of Work." By JOSEPH PENNELL. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.)
- "Beautiful Buildings in France and Belgium." With descriptive Notes by C. HARRISON TOWNSEND, F.R.I.B.A. (Fisher Unwin. 10s. 6d. net.)

"WHEN you deal with any ancient artistic creation," says Mr. Chesterton in his introduction to "The Book of Job," "do not suppose that it is anything against it that it grew gradually." And so to a pleasant disquisition on other cases of great literature created without the assistance of "the insane individualism of modern times." Was the warning necessary? Do we really believe that the unity of a work depends upon its having been written by a single individual? Take another illustration from our own modest list, the "Arabian Nights." That series of folk tales, too, grew gradually out of a nation's higher wisdom. Who questions its artistic success? Not the publishers, who never tire of bringing out fresh illustrated editions, nor the public who, even after two years of war and persistent exhortations to cut down luxuries, may confidently be expected to buy these volumes. If there were no other reason, literary and artistic taste, surfeited with war compositions, requires its antidote.

"The Book of Job" is as good a Christmas book as any for our chastened mood. Job's trials are melancholy but suggestive reading, and Mr. Chesterton's introduction supplies the necessary touch of cheerfulness, for he proves quite conclusively that Job was an optimist, whereas the comforters were pessimists of the deepest dye. The pictures—which we had set out to talk about when the introduction pulled us up—have the outstanding recommendation that they are not of the conventional—and commercial—Bible type. Miss Tongue reminds us a little of Watts in some of the plates, notably that illustrating "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away"; Job is throughout a somewhat Wattsian figure, and the technique is not dissimilar. But the frontispiece of the three sons and three daughters of Job, feasting, has a touch of Spanish recklessness in its color, and there is a quite individual courage and effectiveness in "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." The art of Mr. René Bull, the illustrator of "The Arabian Nights" and Prosper Mérimée's "Carmen," is much less debatable. He believes in picturing things by stating them, subject only to his own feeling for color and a safe decorative instinct. He has an affection for globular forms, probably because these minister to his decorative faculty, and for rich greens and buffs and blacks, which have the air of being laid on for permanence. With this architectural quality, his color work shows the most precious regard for detail. Nowhere does the texture of a robe or turban, the jewel in a ring or a wristlet, the sheen on a scimitar, escape him. In "The Arabian Nights" the black and white drawings are ten times as many as those in color, and we are inclined to

consider this fortunate as well as economical. For his color, in spite of a certain syren attractiveness, is a little too hot even for an Arabian Night.

"Carmen" gives Mr. Bull the opportunity, which he takes, of being once more the straightforward illustrator. He moves with more freedom in the world of the beautiful Spanish gipsy and Don José; and he draws the episodes of the romantic tragedy with convincing gusto. The dramatic sense is evident in his facial expressions and vigorous rendering of action. The characters look their emotions honestly; which reminds us that in Mr. Bull's "Arabian Nights" his puppets grimace overmuch. Both these books, however, afford a welcome if temporary relief from war thoughts and literature. So does Hans Christian Andersen. The last, with Mr. Harry Clarke's illustrations, surpasses everything else in the generous display of its get-up. There is no hint of a paper famine or of vastly increased costs of production. It would be a pity if there were, for Mr. Clarke's pictures deserve a handsome setting. He has learned something from the Japanese, and much from the old European wood engravers; some of his black-and-white work has the depth and richness of a woodcut. He is skilled, too, in the use of black for decorative illustration, and courageous in the handling of strong color. The book is a present for the adult rather than the child, for the latter, who would take these living and human tales of yesterday as real history of real persons, would probably like the illustrations to be nearer to his own homely conception of reality; that is, if he were not an abnormally imaginative child. Mr. Clarke's wares are wholly decorative and abstract. Take his soldier, for example, in the story of "The Tinder Box." Could anyone imagine so thin-legged an individual having been passed for general service, even by a Mill Hill doctor? And what of his accoutrements—huge hat, plume of a bygone feminine fashion, parti-colored breeches, flapping boots, and rapier-like sword? Yet with this sword, and in spite of what must have been impediments to freedom of action, he cut off the head of the witch who would not give him the tinder-box.

"Rip Van Winkle" brings us a little nearer to the war by reminding us how very pleasant it would be to go to sleep and not wake up till it was all over. One feels one could put up with the inconveniences of Rip's waking. The old Dutch-American story presented here loses little by the fact that the pictures are not Dutch-American, but Mr. Arthur Rackham's; Rip has long since become denationalized, has been received into the world child's gallery of heroes. The touch of cosmopolitanism in Mr. Rackham's artistic composition enables him to give us a quite convincing Rip, while his sense of the grotesque applies itself happily to what was truly a grotesque sequence of events. If it be said that the total result is an illustration of his own artistic wiles and methods as much as of the story, then that is the penalty of his possessing a well-marked and potent (and popular) individuality. In the case of "The Bible Story" illustrations we have no such individuality to comment on or attempt to probe. These pictures, which are of the conventional and homely type, bear no signature nor other identification mark. We seem to have met their like before, more particularly that of David dodging Saul's javelin; but this may be due to latent memories of the standard Bible pictures of our youth. However, the letterpress of this work is more noticeable than the illustrations, for Mr. William Canton has discovered a really effective way of telling the Bible Story, or part of it. He tells it in his own modern style, but brings in enough of the text to prevent one losing the Bible atmosphere. He popularizes the dialogue to some extent, but always with a nice sense of fitness, and his interpolations do not have the irritating effect produced by many others of their kind. Older students, possessed of their share of sympathetic imagination, need no transcript of the Book of books, but to children its reading is still some

thing of a penance, largely because it is part of a curriculum. Mr. Canton's stirring version should remove this difficulty for many.

Our last two books are concerned with Mr. Pennell as the apostle of the wonder of work, and with certain buildings in France and Belgium. In spirit and manner alike, these two are strikingly antithetical to each other. Mr. Pennell's introduction to "Pictures of the Wonder of Work" cries out against the lack of attention paid by artists to the structural works of man that are being created in their midst. Mr. Pennell in his drawings, takes hold of the great industrial cities of America, their sky-scrapers, their bridges, their iron and steel works, wharves and power works, and of the fruits and evidences of modern toil in European centres. It is characteristic of his mission that he should lithograph the Campanile of Venice, not as it was nor will be, but in process of construction, with the scaffolding round its top. And as Whistler extracted beauty from the ugliest buildings of London when seen by night, so Mr. Pennell's scaffolding takes on the mystical fascination of old Gothic pinnacles; his stark chimneys roar their smoky message in graceful patterns to the skies; the unyielding ironwork of a Hamburg shipyard loses all the unpleasant attributes of rigidity. He has been to Essen, and has captured a great gun in the act of suspension by a giant crane; to the Belgian Borinage, whence he has drawn vivid impressions of murky darkness and blinding flame; to the Rhine, where he has justified his preference for the new mills and stacks over the old castles. As we write, Mr. Pennell is showing pictures of munition works in a Bond Street gallery, and we can recall his Panama drawings. Mr. Muirhead Bone is the official draughtsman of dug-outs on the Western Front, and Mr. Brangwyn's big-scale etchings of industrial buildings have long been familiar. Are we then to conclude that Mr. Pennell and his brother draughtsmen of the dignity of modern labor are the heralds of a new artistic generation, moving at a much brisker pace than heretofore towards the visualization of ultra-modern monuments? At the present rate of destruction there will be few of the older ones left at the end of the war, and this circumstance may help to decide the question.

But we are reminded by "Beautiful Buildings in France and Belgium," that there still exists some reverence for the past works of man. Boys and Prout, Roberts, Callow, and Coney, who did the drawings reproduced in this book, altogether lacked the brilliant equipment of Mr. Pennell, and they were archaeologists rather than artists; but we feel that these reminders of much that has been destroyed by shot and shell will find an immediate and a future public. The modern cult will doubtless expand, and with enormous benefit to artist and layman, but it will never exclude the past, for the simple reason that there will always be people who live in the past.

THE SUPERFLUOUS PARENT.

"Wanted, an English Girl." By DOROTHEA MOORE. (Part-ridge. 6s.)

"Mrs. Manning's Wards." By MAY BALDWIN. (Chambers. 4s.)

"A Girl Munition Worker." By BESSIE MARCHANT. (Blackie. 3s. 6d.)

"An English Girl in Serbia." By MAY WYNNE. (Collins. 5s. net.)

"Three Sailor Girls." By E. E. COWPER. (Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 3s. 6d. net.)

"Madge Mostyn's Nieces." By L. T. MEADE. (Chambers. 5s.)

"Judy and the Others." By VIOLET BRADBY. (Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 2s. 6d. net.)

"Edmée." By MRS. MOLESWORTH. (Macmillan. 3s. 6d.)

Here are eight books for growing girls and only one complete set of parents among them. The fact is significant. Economists are continually stressing the hampering effects of children upon parents. In these stories, and the certainty of their popularity makes them representative, we have the children's reply. In real life parents undoubtedly hamper one until with years of discretion one puts them away quietly on the Surrey Hills or at Wendover or Brighton, and become parents in their stead. Orphanhood is in the highest tradition of adventurous fiction. David Copperfield

and Roderick Random both start early upon the road of freedom, and if David makes us spend some sighs and tears on his mother's death, the Gills and Nancies of these volumes are less wasteful.

How can a parent help being in the way? That is the difficulty when Silver Locks and the Tar Baby have lost the first fine careless rapture of their unvaried telling, when Alice in Wonderland, and Hans Andersen, and the Child's Garden and the Water Babies are known too nearly by heart to be enlivening, when the long years of long days have set in, the days of reading to oneself, curled in arm-chairs, lost to all company but the printed word, recalled only after prodigious wandering to lunch and tea and supper and to bed. How is the parent to keep control of her child's mind upon these journeys? She must find something not subversive of morals, she insists, and the child insists with equal emphasis on her side, that she shall not be given the sort of thing that conduces to sleep. And the child is quite right. It does not matter much what she reads as long as she wants to go on reading. For our own part we should say, read anything—read for pride as well as for pleasure, read Dumas and Plutarch, and "Salammbô" and "Gulliver's Travels," and "The Ancient Mariner" and Scott and Dickens, and the "Adventures of Henry Esmond," and the only thing you must not do is to yawn over them. But after reading all the classics five times over there will still be time in those immense afternoons for a book like "Wanted, an English Girl." It is the sort of thing that keeps ladies awake at Bournemouth. The heroine might be twenty-six, or whatever the fashionable age is, instead of, gloriously, sixteen. Gillian, it goes without saying, was an orphan, with no one to block her path but an utterly comic Aunt Edith, who, instead, buys her an umbrella and sends her to stay *au pair* in the house of Baroness von Traume in the Independent Duchy of Instenburgh in the month of July, 1914. We need hardly add that Bertha von Traume looked like a badly stuffed sack, and was learning English solely for the purpose of speaking it in conquered London. The incidents, glittering with orders and coronets, would not shame the pen of a governess with the very latest thing in bombs in her bonnet-box. Prince Waldemar, one of that wicked Kaiser's sons, stops short at no villainy, and before the victorious British soldiery have swept him from the scene, he has kicked a wounded British officer and said in his typically Prussian way, "Stand up when I approach you, you English swine. Gott strafe England." Algebra will seem less worth while than ever next January.

"Mrs. Manning's Wards," on the other hand, belongs rather to the conducive than to the subversive school. Mrs. Fairchild herself would be perfectly at home with the orphaned Jessica, who lays cool hands on fevered brows and keeps on softening people until the harsh outlines of their natures are just one sugary mass. In addition to this happiness, she and Cuthbert become the heirs of Lord Bentley, and continue to observe the midday Sunday dinner in the most virtuous way.

What Mrs. Fairchild would think of "A Girl Munition Worker" is difficult to say. For Deborah, in spite of her name, was modern of the modern, and, not contenting herself with shooting the finger off a German spy as he was in the very act of moving the guilty button of a Zeppelin-guiding torch, she went on and finished the fellow by running him over with a taxicab. Deborah had grit, and a keen sense of duty, and she had lost only one parent, we are glad to say, though her father, the colonel, was rather badly shaken when they bumped over the spy.

"To lose one parent is a misfortune, to lose both is very like carelessness." Tom and Nancy Allerson, in "An English Girl in Serbia," went further than this, and lost a Serbian uncle and an aunt as well. However, this sent them travelling across Serbia during the great retreat of last winter, carrying dispatches, and evading Bulgarian Bands, and Miss May Wynne has made a good story of their adventures. We are sure, though, that the book does not gain by having in it, among its pleasant pictures, photographs of starving peasants and invading Germans.

However, people will always seek to make the facts of this war palatable with a coating of fiction, whether in official communiqués or elsewhere, and in "Three Sailor Girls" Miss Cowper has made them very palatable indeed.



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We should love to hunt submarine bases off the Cornish coast in a ketch with newly covered cushions, especially when our enemy, the spy, wears a Trilby hat and yellow boots. This is a book full of fun and character and open air, and the sailor girls are thoughtful dears, and send frequent telegrams to their widowed mothers.

"Madge Mostyn's Nieces" is a thoroughly representative L. T. Meade story concerning a select establishment for young ladies. Handsome is as handsome does, naughtiness brings its own reward, liars are caught lying, pretty frocks are worn on fête days. Quite a new sort of book is "Judy and the Others." These children are the children that all of us know by sight—bare-legged and sandalled, red-haired and vegetarian. Miss Bradby gets a great deal of fun out of their life in Linstone among dull-coated beef-eaters. Judy is a sweet person, and Miss Bradby holds the balance between fad and commonplace delicately poised. There is no favoritism, but—Judy appears in stockings in the last chapter. Mrs. Molesworth's "Edmée," published some years ago as "The Little Old Portrait," is full of the grace that we expect from her. It is a story full of sympathy. Mrs. Molesworth came too early for the modern depreciation of the Revolution as a Bourgeois push. Her aristocrats are haughty, her peasants starving, but whatever her history may be, she has filled this book with the excellences of faith and charm, and we add, conscious of the implication, with parents.

RHYMES AND PICTURES.

- "Chuckles." Pictures by A. E. KENNEDY. Verses by JESSIE POPE. (Blackie. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Old-Not-Too-Bright and Lilywhite." By HAROLD SIMPSON. Illustrated by G. E. SHEPHERD. (Ward, Lock. 1s. net.)
- "Nursery Rhymes of London Town." By ELEANOR FARJEON. Illustrated by MACDONALD GILL. (Duckworth. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Princess Marie Jose's Children's Book." (Cassell. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Favorite Nursery Rhymes." Illustrated by FRANK ADAMS. (Blackie. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "English Nursery Rhymes." Illustrated by DOROTHY M. WHEELER. (Black. 5s. net.)
- "Nursery Rhymes." Set to New Tunes by HARRY BELL. Illustrated by JOSEPHINE WINSER. (The Southernwood Press. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "Our Hospital A.B.C." By JOYCE DENNIS, HAMPTON GORDON, and M. G. TINDALL. (Lane. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "Rhymes for Riper Years." By HARRY GRAHAM. Illustrated by NORAH MASSEY. (Mills & Boon. 3s. 6d. net.)

ONE finds it hard to write of children's pictures and of children's rhymes this year. How much freshness, vigor, originality, quaintness, fantasy, vision, delight, is at this moment being trampled into the mud of France and Flanders, hung up in barbed-wire entanglements, mowed down by guns of enemy or friend. This seems a war waged by the powers of evil, that is, by stupidity and selfishness, against youth and the happiness and beauty of the world. We at home have little heart for Christmas books. Who is there left to make them for us? We have searched through the pile of books before us to see if we could find a single drawing which gives us anything like the same kind of pleasure which we get from the work, say, of Boutet de Monvel, and have found scarcely one. The Boutet de Monvels are all in the trenches.

We asked a little girl to choose for her own which of these nine books she liked best. Her choice fell upon "Chuckles," an animal picture-book, with pictures by A. E. Kennedy and verses by Jessie Pope, so well known as a contributor to the patriotic Press. The subject probably accounted for the child's choice. There is, of course, no plaything for a child like an animal—a real living cat or dog or squirrel. Ruskin called a squirrel "a plaything invented by an angel for your children." The description fits a kitten more exactly still. The whole panorama of the animal world is marvellous, and its magic was felt intensely by the old simple people among whom the fairy tales arose. This magic is the very stuff of which fairy tales are made. Apart from that, animals, geese, for instance, are delightful creatures, intrinsically and in themselves, considered in a realistic manner and without wonderment. But these dogs in motor cars, kittens tobogganning, and the rest, have lost

their natural and intrinsic charm and have gained no magical qualities. The same thing strikes us about the pictures and verses in "Old Not-too-Bright and Lilywhite." They are grotesque, but quite fail either to amuse or charm. We pause in our consideration of these books to refresh ourselves by making some nonsense-verses of our own:—

The witches and the wizards,
The leopards and the lizards,
Feel cold chills strike their gizzards
At every summer storm;
But razor-bills and puffins,
In the dark month of muffins,
In Arctic lands keep warm.

Our own choice, if our merits and sufferings were to be rewarded by the gift of one of these nine books, would fall on Miss Eleanor Farjeon's "Nursery Rhymes of London Town." To ourselves personally these rhymes are always the pleasantest feature in the weekly "Punch." The collection of them in this little volume will no doubt be welcomed by many readers. "Kingsway," the rhyme with which the book opens, is perfectly delightful. It goes like this:—

"Walking on the Kingsway, lady, my lady,
Walking on the Kingsway, will you go in blue?
With an ermine border and a plume of peacock's feathers,
And a silver circlet and a sapphire on your shoe?"
'Neither blue nor sapphire I'll wear upon the Kingsway,
I will go in duffle-grey and barefoot too.'"

The pictures, too, of persons and of things are very pleasant. Both drawings and verses give the sense of a kind and simple world inhabited by childlike people who liked bright colors and gay songs and pleasant things. In contrast with the hideous present—it is doubtless an illusion—the very wars of that old time seem like troubles of children in the nursery.

We are reminded of the miseries of our own day by the "Princess Marie Jose's Book," which is being sold for the benefit of the Belgian babies. It is full of good things, and should be bought by everybody with half-a-crown to spare. There is an "Easter Nursery Rhyme" by M. Cammaerts, which, in our opinion, is worth all the rest of these nine books put together. Mary Magdalene in the garden talks with the indifferent birds:—

"Quel est cet homme au bout de l'allée?"
La fauvette crie: "Le Jardinier."

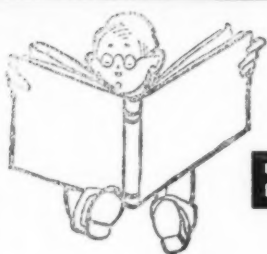
We know no living poet with quite the same note as M. Cammaerts. It happens to be the one thing which delights the present writer more than anything else in the world.

There is nothing of this spontaneity, this April freshness, this quick motion, in the three volumes of illustrations of old English nursery rhymes which lie before us. Of the three, the pictures of Mr. Frank Adams are the best. Miss Dorothy Wheeler's illustrations are lifeless and self-conscious. Her King Arthur pats his pudding with his spoon. Her Old King Cole has no living interest in his punch. Kings should feast royally, as Edward III. still feasts with his great lords on the Peacock Brass at Lynn. The wind that blew out of Picardy that night and filled the sails upon the narrow seas was not more full of freshness and of movement than the figures on this brass. The medievals were not ashamed to eat and drink. One goes back in thought and hears the harps and dulcimers in some thirteenth-century banquet hall as they serve a sucking-pig stuffed with almonds and raisins and rice and pistachio nuts. The old illuminations show such things. In the pictures before us the drummers tap their drums without energy or conviction, the harpers hold their harps listlessly in nerveless hands. Miss Josephine Winsor's boys and girls, again, are pretty but lifeless.

The "Hospital A.B.C." is topical. The illustrations are very cleverly drawn. Last of all we have "Rhymes for Riper Years." They are pleasant verses, reminiscent of Calverley. This is the way of them:—

"Childhood! When pleasant foods were banned,
And elders mercilessly planned
That in the corner I should stand
For each alleged transgression;
When sojourns in some cupboard dark,
And daily walks in Regent's Park,
Would quench imagination's spark
And fill me with depression;
When I was always being led
Upstairs and washed and put to bed."

The pictures in this book are very good.



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We have here ten stories, of which nine, with varying degrees of accuracy, can be described as stories of the Great War. Of these nine, no fewer than six deal exclusively with the War at Sea, one only with the campaign in France and Flanders. What is there to account for this preponderance of naval stories? A superficial observer, perhaps, would say that the writers have studied public opinion, which is more interested in the first line of defence than in the Expeditionary Force. But if there ever was a time when the wonder of our Navy came nigh to being eclipsed by that of the Army, created in two crowded years, that time is now. We have been fed daily with stories and pictures from the front for many months past. The Navy had the Battle of Jutland, of course; but for one such battle at sea there have been twenty as exciting and as picturesque on land. The problem really seems insoluble; the more so because the writer of books for boys has constituted himself a kind of journalist since the war began, and aims at being topical or nothing.

Take the first book on our list, the one tale of the Western Front, "With Haig at the Front," by Mr. Tom Bevan. We feel confident that had the year been 1915 instead of 1916, the title would have read, "Under French's Command"—indeed, this title actually did grace another book by another writer in 1915. Next year—well, the possibilities are too great for us to dare prophesy, but we have no doubt that Mr. Bevan and his fellow scribes will be as topical as usual. Meanwhile, this volume and its companion, almost inevitably called "Under Jellicoe's Command," call for first attention, not only because they bulk larger in size, nor even because they show a fair-minded anxiety to distribute favor in equal doses to the two services, but because they follow all the good traditions. Cecil Bright, the hero of the first, is a clean, healthy-minded English "Terrier," who wipes the floor with every Boche he can meet, always without temper, and makes himself thoroughly agreeable to his French Allies. He tells his own story, too, or is made by Mr. Bevan to tell it, and quite a good record it is of doings at Festubert and Loos, with plenty of bayonets and bombing and big guns and Jack Johnsons, and other things that make life worth fighting for. The thrills come too thick and fast to allow time for moralizing, and when a companion says, in a weak moment of hankering after more peaceful scenes: "I don't want the air tainted with powder and graveyard smells. I want it pure and sweet, cows grazing, sheep bleating, and a milkmaid coming from a barn, not a soldier from a billet," our hero very properly calls his attention to a passing aeroplane. Dick Duggan, the hero of "Under Jellicoe's Command," is an older-established and not less revered type of British boyhood. He starts life as deck hand on his uncle's North Sea trawler, and after many exciting adventures, including shipwreck and the capture of the Kaiser's double, is elevated to the rank of midshipman in His Majesty's Navy. The narrative jerks and jolts with incident all the way through, for Dick, when he is not on the "Rose Bush" or the "Arethusa" of famous memory, must needs be doing a little rounding-up of spies on land. The spy incident gives the author his chance to introduce the journalistic note, "Great Britain ought to be ruled by soldiers and sailors in war-time, and not by a pack of all-talk lawyers," the cook said. 'No politics,' Shoppy Wolff warned him. 'It isn't politics, it's common sense I'm talking,' the

cook replied. 'Common sense is what our lawyer-politicians do not possess.' How true to "John Bull" and the "Daily Mail!"

Our next book, "Pincher Martin, O.D.," is the best of the bunch. A good deal of the story was published serially in "Chambers's Journal"; the remainder had to be completed, and the whole book brought together, during brief intervals between the author's spells of active service. "Taffrail" writes persuasively of the life of the ordinary seaman. Pincher Martin joins the "Belligerent" in this capacity some months before the declaration of hostilities, and we thus get a glimpse of peace-time conditions; but half-way through the book, while Martin is at home for a few days, there comes the fatal message, "Leave cancelled. Return to ship," and thereafter the story moves rapidly from one stirring episode to another. One of the most thrilling is the torpedoing of the "Belligerent" at night-time, told with a straightforward dramatic force that makes it a model for such stories. There are humorous episodes as well, such as that of the Zeppelin which turned out to be a cloud, and its head and tail-lights a couple of stars. Above all, "Taffrail's" characterization is essentially human and sympathetic. We encounter no artificial heroes or artificial villains. The book radiates a fair-mindedness which is characteristic of the Service man's attitude towards his enemy.

We have read Fleet-Surgeon Jean's previous naval yarns with a good deal of pleasure. "A Naval Venture" is written with his usual spirit and cheerfulness, and as it is based on the naval operations in the Dardanelles, including the landing at Gallipoli, it should meet with a hearty reception. The tale is mainly concerned with the personal achievements of a high-spirited band of "snotties" on the armored cruiser "Achates," and there is as much fun and frolic as war; but the leading episodes of the great combined attack are interwoven with the narrative. In Mr. Westerman's "Rounding up the Raider" we are taken off the beaten track of the war. Von Riesser is as cunning a German as one would wish to meet, and he handles his ship, the "Pelikan," with a skill and ingenuity that require all the resources of a trio of British sub-lieutenants to defeat; more especially because the latter start with the disadvantage of being prisoners in von Riesser's hands. The "Pelikan" ultimately finds her way, like the German raider of history, to a far distant shore, where she is bottled up in a creek and destroyed, not, however, till she has done a good deal of damage to her assailants. Just to show what a lot of needless trouble the German will go to when he wants to be extra-subtle, Mr. Westerman makes von Riesser try to chloroform his prisoners in their cabin, when locking the door on them would have answered his purpose just as well. The story, however, is generally free from silliness, and the descriptions of the encounters in the wild South American creek are well enough done.

"Frank Forrester" reminds us that no Christmas list would be complete without the name of Mr. Herbert Strang. This is a capital story. Frank is agent for his father's carpet business in Erzerum, and the narrative opens with a journey made by him in quest of a priceless carpet which a Kurdish chief is anxious to sell. A German trade rival nearly spoils the completion of the deal, and when war is declared in Europe, and Turkish sympathies in Asia Minor swing violently to the side of the Central Powers, Herr Monckhaus proves a formidable foe. Frank is arrested and imprisoned. But he effects an escape that Casanova would have liked to relate of himself, and appears later in Gallipoli, and, after perilous wanderings, gets picked up by the British Fleet. He is present, in the capacity of interpreter, at the famous landings, nor does his particular job prevent his doing a good deal of hard fighting. The yarn ends with the complete discomfiture and capture of Monckhaus, and a V.C. for the British hero.

Now for a brief space to the War in the Air, as pictured for us in Mr. Percy Westerman's "The Secret Battleplane." Its inventor, Desmond Blake, has perfected his work, despite the cold-shouldering of the War Office and Admiralty, in a spirit of pure patriotism. To his house come for shelter from a snowy night and help for their damaged motor-cycle Athol Hawke and Dick Tracey, two youths who have been discharged from the Army because they were discovered to have overstated their ages. How these three

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The scene of Mr. W. D. Fordyce's "The Gun-Runners" is the Straits Settlement, the story that of a pair of sinister villains, Eurasian and Dutch, who take great risks for the sake of smuggling a consignment of rifles to a savage tribe. The plot is mysterious, and only the title gives us an indication of what it is all about, until we get very near the end. Then there is kidnapping, a chase by a British cruiser, a capture, and a rescue, all without unnecessary killing—for which best thanks. Mr. John Finnemore gives us in "Teddy Lester, Captain of Cricket," one of his stories of the school world. There is an entertaining "spy" incident, but otherwise the narrative might have been penned any time before August, 1914; cricket matches, the gentle rivalry of "houses," schoolboy pranks and counter-pranks are the wares it offers. Small beer for these days, perhaps, but pleasant enough for the school and sport brigade of young readers. We suppose there are more lurking somewhere.

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One should, perhaps, clear the ground by repeating the eternal fact that there are two kinds of fairies. There are the objective fairies—that is to say, beings on a different plane from our own, which reason tells us may quite possibly exist, but of which that is, and must as yet be, the limit of our knowledge. On the other hand, there are the subjective fairies—that is to say, our ideas of those beings. They

compose the whole of that delicious jumble that we call fairyland—of dwindled gods and goddesses; of anthropomorphized natural objects, the sun, the moon, stars, clouds, winds, trees, flowers, birds, animals; of heroes, giants, pigmies; of dreams, mirrored forms, breath, shadows, echoes—all mixed up with our own social order of kings, queens, and so on. There is no need, of course, for any trouble over the "unreality" of these fairies. Ideas they certainly are; but who knows where the ideal and the real meet, if not in fairyland?

For present purposes, anyhow, the important thing is that the fairies—considered as projections of ourselves into nature—have changed with what we call human progress. They have, among other things, grown less and less terrible. If Mr. Gosse had said that the fairies had grown more fit to be described as the "People of Peace" than they once were, he would, one feels, have been entirely right. The war may throw back our social, well-being indefinitely. But fairyland—that universal repository of human ideals—remains immune. It knows no reaction. It can improve, but cannot degenerate. Some of our still popular fairytales are horrible, perhaps. But their horror is nothing to that of the fairytales that the mind of civilized man has rejected. And such horror is always destined to defeat. However much Europe may reek with blood, optimism is still the fairy-law!

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London: HUMPHREY MILFORD, University Press, Amen Corner, E.C.

same time, the fairy element invigorates and idealizes all that it touches. To understand this to the full, one needs to read the pretty little melodramatic story of "Mikhail, the Kringel-Seller," or the beautiful little war-parable of the redemption of Maksim, the thief, in the light of some of the old legends, such as that of the Golden Knight and the Lady of Moscow, or of "Little Ivan." Russia's fairyland is, after all, just Russia's ideals given a habitation and a name.

It is our oldest ally—Portugal—that we have to thank for a little collection of what are really just the world-old tales, but with a certain grace of their own in the telling that makes them a welcome gift from the nation which gave us that masterpiece of romance, "Amadis of Gaul." Although arriving *via* Brazil, the "Contos para Crianças" are nearly all of obviously Western origin, save, perhaps, that of "The Black Princess" herself, who seems at least to have owed her complexion (ultimately remedied by the Good Fairy) to the land of her birth. In "The Prince-Dragon" we have a Portuguese "Cupid and Psyche," lamp and all. Then we have a "Little Mermaid" of the Amazon, and an "Ondina" with golden hair, who was carried to her lover by fairy-swans, a "King-Cat," and a "Snowdrop," who, one is sorry to notice, broke her marriage vow after a couple of hours—a thing no self-respecting fairy would do. All the same, these stories from Brazil are exceedingly pretty, simple, and graceful, and beautifully illustrated by Miss Florence Mary Anderson.

Another pleasant volume, which is altogether acceptable without adding anything very startling to fairy-traditions, is the Hon. J. W. Fortescue's "Three Pearls"—a sort of fairy-novel with a brightly-told story of a Sea Queen and her mermaids, a young Sailor-Prince, and the lost pearls of King Chen's crown. It owes very much indeed to Miss Alice Woodward's exquisite line-drawings. They have delicacy, feeling, truth in every touch.

With all its undimmed radiation of human idealism, one feels somehow that even our literary fairyland is still, as ever, jealous of any ulterior purpose. Its laws must be its own, its fancies unweighted with expediency. Any hint of practical exploitation brings us back to commonplace with a thud. There is just a touch of this, one fears, in "The Cradle Ship," frankly devised to accustom children to the facts of sex—in flowers and so on—so that parents can tell them more easily, when the right time arrives, "how babies come." It is very tenderly and earnestly done. But, of course, so far as fairies are concerned, all babies come from fairyland.

In a way, the same law applies to Lady Gregory's play, "The Golden Apple." It has been written confessedly with a view to putting together bits from Irish folk-tales into a children's play, to be produced on purely conventional principles, like that wonderful American-Chinese play, "The Yellow Jacket." Although it would be a little long for children, and the persistence of the Gaelic locutions is rather a strain on the English reader, "The Golden Apple" should serve its purpose excellently. It is full of genuinely beautiful fancy and of naive humor—the idea of the giant on stilts (boldly betrayed in the simple illustrations) is a capital one—and Lady Gregory has woven her folk-lore very cleverly round a "Goose Girl" plot. But fairy magic in book form does not thrive on stage practicability. When the play is put on, doubtless the fairies will bless the stage. As it is, one feels that, to be a real fairy-gift, the story should be either told as a story or played as a play. Of course, this would mean all the trouble of re-writing from a different point of view for purposes of print. But that is just it. With all their leniencies to sincere, simple-hearted, and unsparingly sacrificial endeavor, the "People of Peace" are ruthless task-masters where art is concerned, and Cinderella must sweep the kitchen-floor just as well as she can possibly sweep it.

ARMS AND THE BOY.

- "Tales of the Great War." By HENRY NEWBOLT. (Longmans 6s. net.)
 "The War: A History and an Explanation for Boys and Girls." By ELIZABETH O'NEILL. (Jack. 5s. net.)
 "The Children's Story of the War." By SIR EDWARD PARROTT. Vol. IV., "The Story of the Year 1915." (Nelson. 3s. 6d. net.)

- "The Empire in Arms." Edited by HERBERT STRANG. (Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 6s. net.)
 "The Blue Book of the War." Edited by HERBERT STRANG. (Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 2s. 6d. net.)
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 "A Child's History of Anzac." By E. C. BULEY. (Hodder & Stoughton. 2s. 6d. net.)
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 "The Maid Marvellous: Jeanne D'arc." By MAGDELENE HORSFALL. (Duckworth. 3s. 6d. net.)

THERE is a passage in one of Bagehot's essays which gives some sound reasons for inducing young people to read history. In history, the essayist says, "somehow the whole comes in boyhood; the details later and in manhood. What we learn afterwards are but the accurate littlenesses of the great topic, the dates and tedious facts. Those who begin late learn only these; but the happy first feel the mystic associations and the progress of the whole." Luckily, most young people need no persuasion to read history. Its heroes and heroines are as real and living to them as the heroes and heroines of romance. Indeed, if romance holds first place in the affections of young people, history is undoubtedly a good second. And if this be true of narratives of the past, what a thrill there is in the history of the present, when the heroes are of one's own time, and many of them almost of one's own generation! No boy (or no man) could read without emotion of how the Canadians held their ground against the first gas attack at Ypres, or of Cradock at Coronel attacking a superior German squadron, and the men of the "Monmouth" cheering the ship that was to escape while they went under. It is small wonder that, with deeds like these to chronicle, histories of the war should form an important section of the Christmas books for young people.

Sir Henry Newbolt's "Tales of the Great War" is certain to find readers of all ages. In the first place, it makes good its author's claim that it is "as accurate as anything yet written," for the story is largely in the words of the actors, and the narratives have been read and corrected by two admirals, a general, and several junior officers. The first section of the book, "The Adventures of a Subaltern," is based upon the letters, and relates the experiences, of an officer who left England for France on March 16th, 1915, and came back wounded on April 27th. This is followed by descriptions of the battles of Coronel and the Falklands, the story of the Emden, a general account of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's handling of his troops from Mons to Neuve Chapelle, the war in the air, and the incidents of the battle of Jutland. But what gives the book its special merit is not its accuracy, nor the extent of ground it covers, nor even the heroic deeds it relates. It is the spirit in which it is written. Sir Henry Newbolt has often proved himself a writer who can stir his readers. His success in this book is, perhaps, all the greater because he is determined that it is his readers themselves who will contribute the emotion. This is how he explains his purpose in the introduction:—

"My part is to give you the truth, the actual facts, well evidenced and clearly arranged. . . . I have told you here of good work and courage and endurance, such as deserve all the loudest adjectives that I could have shouted at you; but I have not shouted, and I have used as few adjectives as possible. It is you, not I, that must make the stories come alive. You will not, I hope, imagine that I have written coldly; no! but the hotter I got myself, the more keenly I wished you to be kindled by your own feelings, and not by my words."

A book written in this spirit can hardly fail to achieve its object.

We have drawn attention on former occasions to the merits of the first three sections of Mrs. O'Neill's book. This year we find them bound up with a fourth section which carries the narrative from June, 1915, to February, 1916. It begins with the great Russian retreat and the fall of Warsaw, and it also records the evacuation of the Dardanelles and the conquest of Serbia. These are episodes on which the Allies cannot look back with satisfaction; and as Sir Edward Parrott's book covers the same events, neither volume is particularly cheerful reading. But the historian has to treat

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of facts, and however much we may wish the contents of both books could have been made different, we can only commend their authors for the excellent narratives they have produced. Both are clearly and spiritedly written, while their illustrations and the many good maps with which they are furnished will enable young readers to follow and understand the different steps in the campaigns.

What would the young people of this generation do without Mr. Herbert Strang? He is certainly one of the most industrious of their providers of books. In addition to producing books of adventure that make him the rival of Ballantyne and Henty, we discover him this year to be the editor of two volumes that will make an irresistible appeal to every boy who sees them. The first is a portly volume, and it needs to be in order to justify its sub-title—"An Account of the British Army, the British Navy, and the Indian and Colonial Forces, their Work, Weapons, and Organization for War." There is, in truth, little pertaining to either service upon which you will not find some information in the book. Here are sectional views of a Lee-Enfield rifle and of a torpedo, plans of systems of trenches drawn to scale, statistics of the organization of cavalry in regiments, brigades, and divisions, descriptions of how a gun works and how a submarine submerges, and glossaries of naval and military terms. It is all astonishingly complete, and this wealth of information is presented in a clear and attractive form. "The Blue Book of the War" is more of a history, though the chapter on trench warfare is packed with just such facts as a boy will be glad to have if he wishes to know something of the mechanism and procedure in modern warfare.

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The next book on our list is the only one entirely devoted to our colonial troops, though these are not neglected by any of the writers we have already mentioned. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps certainly deserve a book to themselves, for though they failed to accomplish what they set out to do in the district that has come to be called Anzac, the name itself and the spirit behind it will live as long as the British Empire. And if they had to leave Gallipoli and the graves of 6,000 of their comrades, they did not really fail, for, as Mr. Buley well says, when they came away "they brought with them—Anzac." For all time to come that word will mean as much to Australians and New Zealanders as Bushido does to the people of Japan." Mr. Buley's book can be recommended as a simple and straightforward account of what the Anzacs have done in the war.

If we have postponed to the end of this notice the two books which deal with the part played by women in war, it is certainly from no lack of appreciation of their heroism or their willingness to do everything within their power to bring victory to the arms of the Allies. With such subjects as Edith Cavell, Emilienne Moreau, the sixteen-year girl who won the Croix de Guerre for her heroism in defending the wounded at Loos, and Sister Myra Ivanovna, to say nothing of the women doctors and nurses and munition workers, Miss Walters's book could hardly fail to interest. Women have had the greater part of the burden of sorrow caused by the war, and they have shown an adaptability and readiness to undertake tasks which were formerly considered only possible to men that is nothing short of marvellous. Miss Walters has a chapter on women soldiers, and, of course, the woman who stands out as one of the greatest soldiers in history is Joan of Arc. It is fitting that during a war when French and English are fighting shoulder to shoulder we should have an English biography of Joan of Arc, and Mrs. Horsfall's volume deserves to find a place in any collection of Christmas books that treat of the spirit in which the Allies have entered upon the war.

TALES AND WONDERS.

- "The World's Wonder Story." By A. G. WHITE. (Watts. 6s. net.)
 "Pilot and Other Sketches." By HARRY PLUNKET GREENE. Illustrated by H. J. FORD. (Macmillan. 6s. net.)
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OUR first large and well illustrated book is described as "for boys and girls." It amounts to a first view of the evolutionary theory, such as few older people achieve, conveyed in vigorous Saxon that is plain and easy without condescension. "If I see anything I don't know," says a little boy who may be the author, "I just mention it." The confession leads up to a very good suggestion for a "topsy-turvy school where the children ask questions and the teachers try to answer them." Socrates is described a little misleadingly as one who always asked questions. It is not Socratic questions that are answered in this book. The "mention" of one thing leads to another, and we travel onward through a true wonder story. The troubles of Galileo, Bruno, and Servetus, because they were wise before their time, are dealt with. Darwin's great work is mentioned as preliminary to the reading of his books which will come secondary. The liveliness of the earth's crust is illustrated by the story of Pozzuoli, than which a better example could not well have been chosen. An illustration of the lancelet shows the dawn of the backbone, and an ancient bird, intended perhaps for *Archæopteryx*, shows how the reptile kingdom has moved. There is much else of that kind founded on the best facts of science, and stated in a way for every boy and girl to understand.

The author next has the courage to deal with the evolution of religion. Fear is founded on ignorance, and early religions were grounded in frightfulness. We are asked to wonder how Adam felt when he first sneezed? Did he think he was going to explode? Perhaps the author forgets here that Adam's forebears had sneezed often enough, as apes, horses, dogs, and even beetles. Amusing legends enliven the narrative here: Quat made men and pigs alike, but his brothers knocked down the pigs and left the men upright. Still better, it is told in Borneo that the first men were made by birds. This has an evolutionary smack. It makes us quite hopeful for the Borneans. The Austrian woodman has our warm sympathy when he says "I beg your pardon" before he begins to fell the tree.

"If Pilot had been a man, he would have been a great explorer, or a brigand, or a distinguished naturalist," we are told. "He would have discovered the North Pole or . . . robbed the Bank of England. Perhaps the last was most in his line." We agree with the last remark, for Pilot was a very bad retriever, perhaps no more a retriever than even the artist makes him—a mongrel even from the outside, unworthy the name. He stole the game, dead or alive, he was supposed to retrieve, and buried it, and in sundry other ways disgraced his profession. His master, the Major, may have been to blame. We can scarcely imagine a Major wise who thinks that the game cemetery that Pilot makes has been the work of cats. We like to hear that Pilot wagged his tail on seeing his keeper get a tip. It is a nice friendly touch. "Bluebells," the next sketch in the book, is a pretty story of a little girl who can see fairies. She has a father and other people of coarser nature who think pigs and postage-stamps more important than fairies. Next comes a little boy, "the pariah." His genius for mischief is great, especially when it is stimulated by a desire for revenge. He sets an alarming series of traps for the servants, who frankly deserve punishment for their treatment of the pariah. Without being of a high order of literature, this medley of stories is sure to be found interesting by those for whom it was intended.

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the "Rambles Among our Industries" series, of which this book is one. The machines, ancient and modern, by means of which the product of the cotton mallow is rendered into yarns, cloths, and sewing cotton, are shown in a way that will delight the boy interested in implements. The treatment is general rather than special, and half the wonders of the cotton mill are not told, as any child will see who "goes over" one of the crack sewing-cotton mills of Bolton. Hargreaves, Arkwright, and other prophets of cotton spinning have their mention, with the more interesting parts of their careers. It is well to recall that the Spinning Jenny was named after Hargreaves's wife. The story of how the mob treated the inventor is graphic and exciting. Readers of this little book will be proud of Lancashire's premier industry.

The life history of the elephant is bound to be interesting, whether or no it includes many dramatic incidents, such as happen to only few individuals. The author has mainly confined her attention to the more general features of elephant existence. She has got to what may be considered to be the inner consciousness of the great beast in his native haunts. At any rate, she makes us wonder what it would be like to be an elephant. There are the troubles of teeth-cutting and the growth of the great tusks. The breezes, the butterflies, the sounds and scents of the jungle, all belong to the story. Later we have fighting for the mastery of the herd, capture and escape, the splendor of prime, and the decadence of old age. The wash drawings of Miss Austen are vigorous and beautiful, and are sure to be considered worthy of the text. The comparison gives them a high standard of value. We have not seen a more sympathetic treatment of the subject.

Like "How I Tamed the Wild Squirrels," Miss Tyrrell's new book is illustrated "by Miss Appleton's clever and delicate pen and brush," a description that we cordially endorse. The prettiest of our wild animals and possible pets appears here in a hundred fairy attitudes, done in carefully chosen colors, tints, and shades. Those who have ever had a baby squirrel about the house must appreciate this little story, with its pictures, with a poignancy that is almost painful. There is joy to be had here, but tragedy also. The Peter of Miss Tyrrell (both the reviewer's squirrels were Peters) fell ill without the first signs being noticed, as often happens with these lively creatures. He took his last swift scramble up the *portière*, and fell with a scream. Thereafter a few days of anxious nursing, and the inevitable end. We dwell on the tragedy side of the picture in case there may be some way of avoiding other squirrel tragedies. Anybody who loves squirrels (and are there any others?) will greatly delight in this dainty quarto, with its masterly pen drawings and other embellishments.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN.

- "The Little Boy Out of the Wood, and Other Dream-plays." By KATHLEEN CONYNHAM GREENE. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "A Parcel for Heaven." From the French of JEAN NESMY. (Sands. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "A Famous Fisherman." By LETTICE BELL. (Hodder & Stoughton. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "Josephine's Happy Family." By MRS. H. C. CRADOCK and HONOR APPLETON. (Blackie. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "The Peek-a-Boos in War-Time." By MAY BYRON and CHLOE PRESTON. (Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Tales and Talks for Little Ones." (Blackie. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "The Wonder-Book of Children of All Nations." Edited by HARRY GOLDBRING. (Ward, Lock. 3s. net.)

THIS year we are going by size; the bundle was done up pyramidally, so we read, and are now about to describe, the smallest books first. But before we begin doing that, let us regard the pyramid as a whole. From that appraisal comes the judgment that this division, at any rate, of the Christmas books displays a definite falling-off from those of former years in originality, drollery, charm, and outward and inward appearance. A consequence, no doubt, of the Great Consequence which has spoilt more important things than a bundle of books for younger children; yet this, too, has its significance and its dolor.

Miss Conyngham Greene's little volume contains seven very short plays, in a manner for the most part vaguely mystic. That which most displays the Maeterlinckian influence is the most successful: "Night Watch," wherein a fisherman's wife, sitting alone, is entered to by three strangers, who are explained, in a surely superfluous "argument," as the forebodings and doubts which come with loneliness, and "vanish when the anxiety is over." They could scarce have remained in presence of the safely-returned husband! But their sinister working on the woman's soul is shown with imagination, and in language admirable for its economy. This latter merit, indeed, is throughout noticeable, but the other little pieces are more commonplace in theme. "The Two Bad Fairies" is a quaintly humorous morsel, in which the fairies so persistently quarrel that neither allows the other to throw her evil gift into the baby's cradle.

M. Jean Nesmy was "crowned" by the French Academy for his novel of 1905, "L'Ivraie." He is now fighting with the French army. The stories—all Christmas ones—in "A Parcel for Heaven" are well translated by E. M. Walker. The titular tale is beautifully told—so beautifully that it refreshes the somewhat outworn theme of which it is a variant. It tells of two small Parisian *gamins* who, to keep alive a still smaller sick one, despatch a doll to heaven for *le petit Jésus*, in the hope that, with this to amuse Him, He will be content to do without their little brother and friend. The baby recovers, and "Mr. Postman" may laugh as much as he likes at the parcel addressed (by Sœur Julie of the convent, at the little boys' dictation) to "Monsieur Jésus, Au Ciel (France)."

Our hesitation is definite as we come to the next volume on our list: "A Famous Fisherman." The fisherman is St. Peter, whose "life-story" is told to two little girls who have travelled in Palestine. His boyhood is detailed at length, with italicized words and sentences which are all to be looked up in the Bible. But these are chosen in a fashion so arbitrary, and even at times so foolish, that they would seem to turn the looking-up into a silly sort of game. Apart from this, there is much in the matter which offends against taste—our taste, at any rate; and that was why we hesitated. One instance, however, we may give. This is the selection, as a quotation for the chapter-heading to an account of the marriage at Cana, of these words from Browning: "The time and the place, and the loved one all together." But evidently there are parents and children to whom the kind of book appeals, for it is a new number in an apparently successful series.

"Josephine's Happy Family" is a continuation of one of the best color-books for very little girls of last Christmas. If it falls below its predecessor in interest and prettiness, that is more a tribute to the original than a judgment on the sequel—for the "Happy Family" has much of both, and should be given to any child who duly appreciated "Josephine and Her Dolls," as well as to her who has not yet been introduced. The latter, though, will certainly look wistful about not possessing the "Dolls." So much the better for Mrs. Cradock and Miss Appleton, since little girls' wistfulness should always be at once dissipated.

Personal taste comes in again distressfully with "The Peek-a-Boos in War-Time." The type of humor embodied by the Peek-a-Boos and their like has always appeared to us a singularly witless one. They are, these Peek-a-Boos, neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring—neither fairies, nor elves, nor gnomes, nor good, nor naughty children. What they are we should find it more difficult to define; are they at once the clowns and drones and bores of the child-world? Whatever they are, we do not want them; and take leave to record that our nephews—twelve and six—most resolutely do not want them either.

"Tales and Talks for Little Ones" is an annual of the admirable Blackie series, designed for the very smallest listeners and lookers. Variety and fun and brilliant coloring are here; the collection is highly miscellaneous, and amusingly arbitrary in the assignment of public credit to writers and artists, for the names of both are as often suppressed as proclaimed. The tale of "The Officer and the Elephant" strikes us as possibly liable to prosecution under the Defence of the Realm Act, for the elephant achieves a complete moral and material victory over the Officer and the Twelve Wooden Soldiers.

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Most important of all the pile is the big base-volume, which tells of the children—and much more than the children—of all nations. Hardly a page without a picture, and none without some entertaining "telling." The pictures are, as they should be, chiefly from photographs, and from very delightful ones. If in the letter-press there sounds occasionally a faint note of patronage for all nations but one, this is a defect which will escape the readers for whom the volume is designed; and it is doubtless also in their interest that no sign is given by the writer of the article called "If you were a Chinese Boy" of any perception of the irony in Stevenson's famous lines (quoted also on the title-page), wherein the children of other lands are asked by a little British boy: "Oh, don't you wish that you were me?"

ANNUALS AND OTHERS.

ANNUALS, in Thackeray's time, were, he tells us, little gilded books which generally made their appearance about Christmas. They contained verses by Miss Landon or Mrs. Hemans, stories by Lady Blessington or Mrs. S. C. Hall, and steel engravings of languishing ladies. They were bought to be given away, and at that point their careers of usefulness came to an end. For nobody ever read them. The contemporary Annual is a very different affair. It retains the gilt, but none of the other characteristics of its predecessors. It appeals to a special public by whom it is warmly welcomed and read with eagerness. Indeed, it would be safe to say that, more than other books, annuals are, at this time of year, the favorite reading of our school-rooms and nurseries. The collection now before us shows no falling-off in quantity or quality. Nearly every taste is catered for, and the established writers have shown amazing cleverness in their variations on the old themes. Take, for example, some of those published by Messrs. Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. Here are Mr. Herbert Strang's "Annual" (6s. net), "The Tiny Folks' Annual" (3s. 6d. net), edited by Mrs. Herbert Strang, and Mrs. Strang's "Annual for Baby" (2s. 6d. net). Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Strang are proved purveyors of this class of book, and the stories, essays, and articles they offer are certain to please. Those who taste their quality are not unlikely to ask for more, prodigal as is our authors' output, for young people can quickly cover an enormous mass of print. The last of the three books we have mentioned deserves a special word of praise. It is just the book to place in the hands of a child who is learning to read. "Blackie's Children's Annual" (Blackie, 3s. 6d. net) is another old favorite. This year it numbers among its writers Mr. Algernon Blackwood, who leads off with a story called "Camping Out," Mrs. George Wemyss, and Miss Jessie Pope; while the artists include Messrs. C. E. and H. M. Brock, Miss Florence Harrison, Miss Alice Woodward, and Miss Honor Appleton. "The Jolly Book for Boys and Girls," edited by Edward Shirley (Nelson, 2s. 6d. net) is now in its seventh year. It differs from most other annuals in not giving the names of the contributors, but the contents are none the worse on that account. They vary from stories of submarines and captures of German spies to accounts of the troubles of a photographer and descriptions of effective puzzles. Collins's "Adventure Annual," edited by Herbert Hayens (Collins, 5s. net), is essentially a boy's book. Its staple fare is adventure in the great war, though there are a number of instructive papers on explosives and projectiles, recent developments in aircraft, and kindred topics. Among the writers are Captain Charles Gibson, Mr. Tom Bevan, and Mr. Archibald Rae. "Collins's Children's Annual" (Collins, 3s. 6d. net) this year reaches its third issue. The stories and verses are of high standard, written as they are by authors of such standing as Miss Katharine Tynan and Miss Gladys Davidson, and the illustrations are furnished by Mr. John Hassall, Mr. S. E. Burnside, Mr. A. A. Dixon, and others no less competent.

LIKE the annuals, many of the "others" are this year largely occupied with the war. One of the best of these latter is "The Wonder Book of Soldiers, for Boys and Girls," edited by Harry Golding (Ward, Lock, 3s. net). It was first published just before the outbreak of the present war, and after running through several editions, it now

appears in an improved form, with many fresh features. The text contains an abundance of trustworthy information on military topics, while there are over three hundred photographs, showing our home and overseas forces in many aspects, both in peace and war. The opening chapters give a detailed description of the British Army, from the pen of Captain Owen Wheeler, who also writes on "Modern Warfare," and Sir Robert Baden Powell contributes an article on "Boy Scouts and the Country." "Britain's Glory on Land and Sea," by Herbert Hayens (Collins, 3s. 6d. net), and "The 'Victory' Adventure Book" (Collins, 2s. 6d. net) are both thoroughly warlike. The first of the two begins with an account of Howe's engagement with the French Fleet on June 1st, 1794, and after narrating episodes of the Peninsular War, Waterloo, Afghanistan, the Sudan, and the Boer War, ends with the naval fight off Jutland. The other volume is a mixture of adventure tales of the present war and articles giving information about the weapons and conditions of fighting that it has called into being. Mr. Herbert Hayens's "Midst Shot and Shell in Flanders" (Collins, 3s. 6d. net) is the story of a young Canadian whom the war caught studying at a German university, and who comes in for plenty of adventure throughout its course.

A VERY different type of war book, intended for older readers, is "Made in the Trenches," edited by Sir Frederick Treves and George Goodchild (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d. net). It is composed entirely from articles and sketches by soldiers, and all profits from its sale will be given to the "Star and Garter" endowment fund for totally disabled soldiers and sailors. Even without this inducement the book would be well worth purchasing, for the soldiers who contribute include many who have become popular favorites. Among them are Boyd Cable, Platoon Commander, R. W. Campbell, Denis Cowles, and Joseph Lee. Every buyer of Christmas books should consider it a duty to give himself the pleasure of possessing it.

"THE TOILS AND TRAVELS OF ODYSSEUS," translated by C. A. Pease (Wells Gardner, 5s. net) is a fresh rendering of most of the "Odyssey" intended for older children. Mr. Pease's version is faithful as well as readable, and it ought to be welcomed by youthful students who want to have something closer to the original than Lamb's "Wanderings of Ulysses" or its many imitators. Mr. Frank C. Papé's illustrations add to the charm of the book, which is excellently printed and produced.

ONE of the results of the war has been to create something like a boom in Russian fairy tales and folklore. They deserve the vogue they are now having, for Russia is one of the great homes of fairy tales, and it is a benefit to have some of its wealth accessible for our own nurseries. A pleasant instalment of this wealth will be found in Mr. Arthur Ransome's "Old Peter's Russian Tales" (Jack, 5s. net). Old Peter tells the stories to his grandchildren, and Mr. Ransome, who reports them to the English public, explains that they are those which Russian peasants tell their children and each other. They, or versions of them, are to be found in the colored chap-books, as well as in the great collections of Russian folklore, but Mr. Ransome has written most of them from memory, modifying and altering a little as he thought fit. Along with Mr. Ransome's book may be mentioned "Russia," edited by Hugh Lawrence (Blackie, 7d. net), one of the "Rambler Travel Book" series, and made up of passages describing what they saw in Russia by authors as diverse as Théophile Gautier, Madame de Staël, Mr. Maurice Baring, and Mr. Stephen Graham.

THERE still exist people who believe that the best stories are those to be found in the Bible, and the difficult task of telling them in modern language has been undertaken by Miss Theodora Wilson Wilson in "The Precious Gift: Bible Stories for Children" (Blackie, 3s. 6d. net.). Readers who were brought up in what used to be called "serious" households will remember the real enjoyment they got from Bible stories re-told in this way, and Miss Wilson Wilson has carried on a good tradition with success. Her book deserves the attention of Christmas book-buyers.

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